

June 25, 2019

Commissioners Court
Administration Building
Houston, Texas 77002

**SUBJECT: Recommendation that Commissioners Court authorize the transfer of responsibility for current and future Operations, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements of the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry to the Harris County Toll Road Authority, without the imposition of tolls for use of such facilities, effective March 1, 2020
Precinct 2**

Dear Court Members:

At the March 26, 2019 Commissioners Court meeting, the Toll Road Authority, Budget Management and the Commissioner of Precinct 2 were asked to study and make recommendations for future capital improvements, maintenance, funding, and operations of the Lynchburg Ferry and Washburn Tunnel System. Based on the findings of this request, it is recommended that Commissioners Court authorize the transfer of responsibility for current and future Operations, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements of the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry to the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA), without the imposition of tolls for use of such facilities, effective March 1, 2020. It is further recommended that Commissioners Court authorize HCTRA to fund and reimburse Harris County for Operations, Maintenance, and Capital expenditures associated with the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry incurred during the current fiscal year, effective immediately.

Chapter 284 of the Texas Transportation Code authorizes HCTRA to fund, operate, maintain, and improve transportation facilities that are not part of Harris County's system of toll roads, such as the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry. Funding for the operations, maintenance, and capital improvements of the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry will occur in the same way and in addition to the annual transfer of mobility funds from HCTRA to Harris County for non-toll transportation purposes. After transferring toll revenues to pay bond debt service and operation and maintenance costs of its toll road system, HCTRA is authorized to transfer funds to the Indenture Mobility Fund that is established under HCTRA's master bond indenture. The Indenture Mobility Fund is the source from which HCTRA makes an annual transfer for Harris County mobility funding. Funds within the Indenture Mobility Fund may also be used to directly pay for the operations, maintenance, and improvement costs of the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry, or funds may be transferred from the Indenture Mobility Fund to the Harris County fund or account from which the Washburn Tunnel and Lynchburg Ferry costs are currently being paid.

HCTRA bond funds, however, may not be used to pay the costs of capital improvements for the Washburn Tunnel and/or Lynchburg Ferry. Under the terms of HCTRA's Master Bond Indenture, toll road bond funds may only be used for HCTRA's tolled facilities.

This agenda item has been reviewed by the Harris County Attorney's office, the Harris County Auditor's office, the Budget Management Department, and HCTRA's outside legal counsel.

Sincerely,



Gary K. Trietsch, P.E.
Executive Director

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cc: HCTRA Management
Budget Management
County Auditor

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Agenda File